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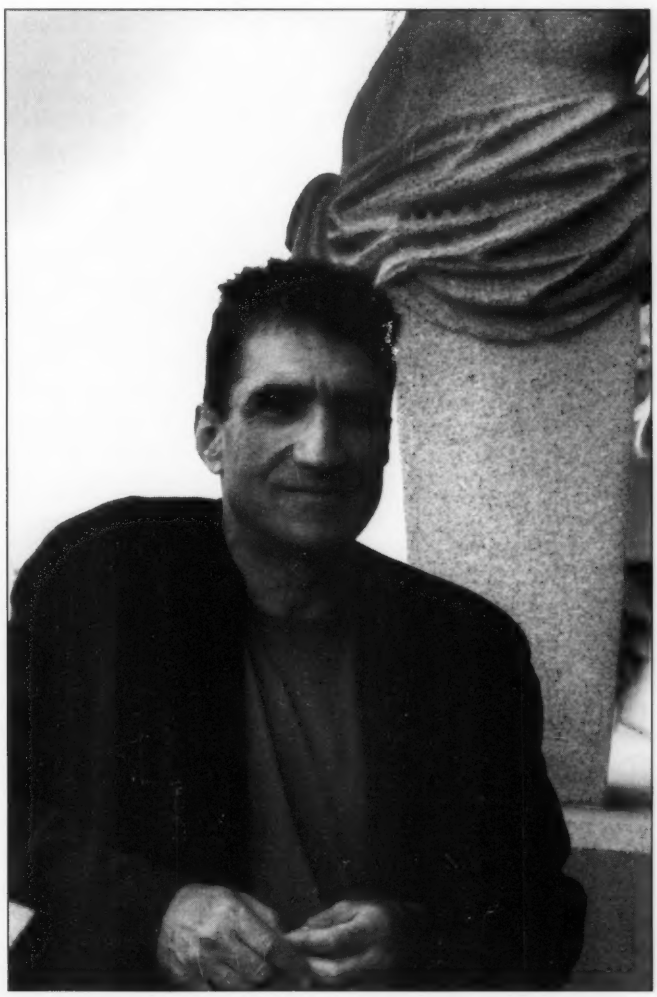

Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky

Library of Congress

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Vol. 56, No. 15
October 1997

JAMES H. BILLINGTON
Librarian of Congress

312

On the Cover: New Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky arrived in the poet's office Oct. 9 and opened the 1997-1998 literary season with a lecture on digital culture. *Photo by N. Alicia Byers*

Cover Story: Mr. Pinsky discussed plans to record Americans reading poetry aloud in the "Favorite Poem" project and gave a lecture on "Digital Culture and the Individual Soul." 322

Bicentennial Plans: Dr. Billington announced plans for the Library's Bicentennial in 2000. 311

Kickoff Gala: The Library launched its Bicentennial with a star-studded gala Oct. 7. 312

317

President Signs Spending Bill: President Clinton signed a bill allotting the Library a budget of $377 million for fiscal 1998. 316

Copyright Listserv: The U.S. Copyright Office has created a subscription e-mail service. 316

Architectural Archives: Architect I.M. Pei chose the Library as the major repository for his personal and professional papers. 317

Digital Support: Federal Express donated $1 million to the National Digital Library Program. 318

American Memory: New on-line collections include one focusing on baseball great Jackie Robinson. 318

318

Portuguese Community Maps: An exhibition on view through November highlights Luso-American communities through maps. 321

Hispanic Heritage: Chilean novelist Isabel Allende spoke to an overflow crowd on Sept. 15, the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month. 324

Brazilian Music: Two new CDs have been released from the Endangered Music Project. 325

News from the Center for the Book 326

Berlin Memories: Author Peter Schneider read for the Archive of World Literature on Tape. 327

1997 Library of Congress Poetry and Literature Schedule 327

324

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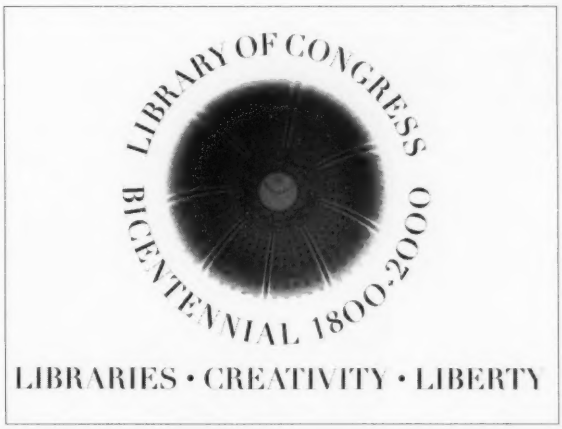
GUY LAMOLINARA, Editor
YVONNE FRENCH & JOHN SAYERS, Production

Dr. Billington Outlines Plans For Library's Bicentennial

On Oct. 6 Dr. Billington laid out preliminary plans for commemoration of the Library's 200th birthday on April 24, 2000.



The Librarian spoke to members of the media in his ceremonial office in the Jefferson Building. "The main thing we want to celebrate during LC's bicentennial is the creative use of knowledge in libraries everywhere. We take pride in our function as a library and take pride in the 'enrichment process' that builds upon the work we do in gathering, cataloging and preserving collections.

"But this bicentennial occasion is not to be a self-congratulatory institutional one. In developing our preliminary plans, we have consulted with Congress, the library community, the White House Millennium Project and the Madison Council," the Library's private sector support group, Dr. Billington said. "We want this anniversary to revalidate the historical role of libraries as centers of learning and to reinvigorate the nation through the greater use of libraries and wider access to knowledge."

The Madison Council has pledged $750,000 as seed money to fund bicentennial projects. A Madison Council gala the following evening (see story on page 312), also raised funds for the project.

Carol Henderson, director of the Washington Office of the American Library Association, said, "One of the most striking things is that LC is reaching out with late-20th and 21st century technology to link up with other libraries using the same technology. The wonderful ideas reflected in the plans for the bicentennial reflect the great energy generated between the local libraries and LC."

John Y. Cole, bicentennial project director and director of the Library's Center for the Book, said, "Libraries are important educational institutions and a natural link between learning and liberty; this is their celebration too."

Four core projects are in the works, Mr. Cole said, around which local communities may build related events. They are:

- **Gifts to the Nation:** "Gifts to the Nation" will be a reciprocal effort that will include significant acquisitions for LC's collections, as well as the commissioning of creative works and the expansion of the National Digital Library Program.
- **Frontiers of Knowledge:** The "Frontiers of Knowledge" program, a series of lectures and symposia exploring ideas that shape lives, will begin with a June 1999 conference called "The Frontiers for the Mind in the 21st Century." Leading scholars will talk about significant developments during the past century and look ahead to challenges in the next. Young participants from every congressional district in the country will be invited to take part in the discussions.
- **Local Legacies:** "Local Legacies" will build upon local projects under way nationally in partnership with LC's American Folklife Center and the Center for the Book. These programs include "Montana Heritage," "Rivers of America," "Literary Maps of America" and "Building a Nation of Readers." The Library also wants to identify local historical collections to be linked with the Library's Web site (http://www.loc.gov/).
- **Favorite Poems:** Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky will develop the "favorite poems" project, which will feature approximately 100 Americans from all walks of life choosing and reading aloud a favorite poem.

Several major publications and exhibitions also are planned, Mr. Cole said. Logos designed by Pentagram Inc. of New York and unveiled at the briefing are pictured here. Visit LC's bicentennial Web site at http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/.

N. Alicia Byers

Among the guests of the Librarian and Mrs. Billington on the evening of Oct. 7 were Mrs. Colin Powell (left) and Gen. Powell (right). Gen. Powell was an honorary vice chairman of the event.

Gala Launches Bicentennial

Elegant Evening Is Library's First-Ever Fund-Raiser

For the first fund-raising event in its history, the Library's Jefferson Building shone as brilliantly as its guests from the worlds of entertainment, sports, the media and other high-powered professions.

About 400 guests raised more than $800,000 at the Oct.7 festivities that launched the Library's bicentennial in 2000. The evening's proceeds will benefit the Bicentennial Fund and support educational outreach programs and the National Digital Library.

Madison Council members James Earl Jones, Katharine Graham, Jerry Jones and Chairman John Kluge joined broadcaster Jim Lehrer, singer Mary Chapin Carpenter and Gen. Colin Powell in the celebration of "Creative America," as the evening was billed. The Great Hall and Main Reading Room were handsomely decorated with trellises of ivy and topiary trees. Green damask covered tables on the lower level while the same fabric in cranberry covered the tables and chairs on the mezzanine, where the guests ate beautiful food and listened and danced to the music of the Lester Lanin Orchestra.

LC staff who were invited to the event and who worked as volunteers also looked their most elegant, with men in black tie and women in evening dresses.

The event began with a reception line of Dr. and Mrs. Billington; Mrs. William Cafritz and Mrs. Alyne Massey, the co-chairs of the event; the event's underwriters: Texaco Chairman Peter Bijur, Bell Atlantic CEO and Madison Council member Ray Smith and General Motors Executive Vice President and General Counsel Thomas Gottschalk; John Kluge, chairman of the Madison Council; and Edwin Cox, Madison Council vice chairman. Cocktails were at 7 in the Main Reading Room and were followed at 8:20 by the inaugural performance in the newly restored Coolidge Auditorium.

James Earl Jones, whose unmistakable baritone is known to millions, presided. "Welcome to the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress," he said. "It is fitting that we begin our bicentennial cel-

ebration in this auditorium of world-renowned acoustics with the words and creativity of America. ... Every word you will hear tonight is preserved in the Library." One of the world's finest acoustic environments, the Coolidge Auditorium, a 485-seat concert hall, has hosted many of the century's most noteworthy performers. It begins its 1997-98 season on Oct. 30, with a concert by the Juilliard String Quartet.

Mr. Jones then introduced actor Avery Brooks, who began by reading a Sept. 21, 1814, letter from Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Smith in which the third president offered his books to Congress following the burning of the Library's collections in the U.S. Capitol by the British.

Mr. Brooks and actress Zoe Caldwell alternated with readings. Ms. Caldwell read letters of four first ladies, beginning with Abigail Adams's July 19, 1799, letter to her sister. Mr. Jones called Adams "the first public American feminist."

That was apparent, when reading from the letter Ms. Caldwell said, "If man is lord, woman is lordess." The audience agreed as it broke into applause.

When Ms. Caldwell read the June 8, 1968, letter from Jacqueline Kennedy to Leonard Bernstein, she assumed the delicate voice of the first lady, who thanked Bernstein for the music he had written for the funeral of Robert Kennedy: It was "the most beautiful music I had ever heard. ... Your music was everything in my heart. ... Will you tell your noble orchestra how many people cried?"

Abraham Lincoln's wrath was palpable as Avery Brooks dramatized a letter the president had written on July 14, 1863, in which he berated Gen. George Meade for his failure to end the Civil War sooner. The letter, however, served only as a way for Lincoln to vent, as he never sent it. "Lincoln had no one to replace him," said Mr. Brooks.

A missive from choreographer-dancer Martha Graham to composer Aaron Copland was especially fitting, as *Appalachian Spring* was commissioned by the Coolidge fund and premiered in the auditorium in 1944. "I realize how fortunate I am to work with you. ... It is so beautiful," wrote Graham.

"Creating is not limited to the arts," said Mr. Jones. "Scientific minds have also left their work at the Library." The audience burst into laughter as he announced he would read from the diary of Alexander Graham Bell. "I can't resist the temptation to read this."

"Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you," the first words spoken into a telephone resonated from the lips of Mr. Jones as he read Bell's diary entry of March 10, 1876.

American popular song was on the lips of opera singers Marilyn Horne and Jerry Hadley. From Jerome Kern, Mr. Hadley sang "All the Things You Are"; from Cole Porter, Ms. Horne's mezzo soprano offered "In the Still of the Night."

After Mr. Brooks read a letter from Jerome Kern, who wrote "Show Boat," he offered a stunning version of "Ol' Man River" that was met with thunderous applause.

Mr. Brooks then reminded the audience that much of the Library's collections were built through copyright deposits, and he retold the story of two "contributors whose legal battles were about copyright": Groucho Marx and Warner Bros.

N. Alicia Byers

The Lester Lanin Orchestra played a rousing mix of dance numbers for the 400 guests.

N. Alicia Byers

Madison Council member James Earl Jones was master of ceremonies; Mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne sang popular songs.

N. Alicia Byers

Warner Bros., the producer of the film "Casablanca," accused the Marx Brothers of copyright infringement because they wanted to make a film of the same name. The audience roared as Mr. Brooks read Groucho's letter asking Warner whether the word "brothers" was also copyrighted. "Professionally we were brothers before you."

"I am sure the average person could distinguish between Ingrid Bergman and Harpo," he wrote. "I am not sure that I could, but I would like to try."

The performances concluded with a duet by Ms. Horne and Mr. Hadley of Irving Berlin's "Call Me Again." When Mr. Hadley flubbed his entrance into the song, Ms. Horne finally interrupted him. "Jerry, c'mon. We're gonna do it right," she said, insisting that they start again. That time he did do it right, and Ms. Horne hugged him at the end. As they left the stage, Mr. Hadley feigned embarrassment at his gaffe.

"These gifts from America's archives," Mr. Jones said, showcase "the variety and uniqueness of America's creative genius."

The volume of the applause left no doubt that everyone had thoroughly enjoyed the performances. After guests had settled at their tables for dinner on the mezzanine of the Great Hall, Dr. Billington toasted their support, saying: "The Library of Congress has been blessed by the generosity of benefactors since its earliest days, most especially the U.S. Congress. Congress, through its annual appropriations of U.S. taxpayer funds, has steadfastly supported the Library since its founding in 1800."

He was also referring to the underwriters of the Oct. 7 event, as well as to the guests who had each contributed $2,500. Many of those guests were members of the Library's private sector support group, the James Madison Council, headed by Mr. Kluge.

Mr. Kluge, president of Metromedia, recognized the efforts of Mrs. Cafritz, Mrs. Massey and the vice chairs of the event. In addition, he acknowledged the honorary vice chairs: John F. Cooke, Mrs. Charles A. Dana Jr., Katharine Graham and Gen. Colin Powell. He also thanked the performers who had provided the evening's entertainment and gave a special nod to the millions of "creative talents"

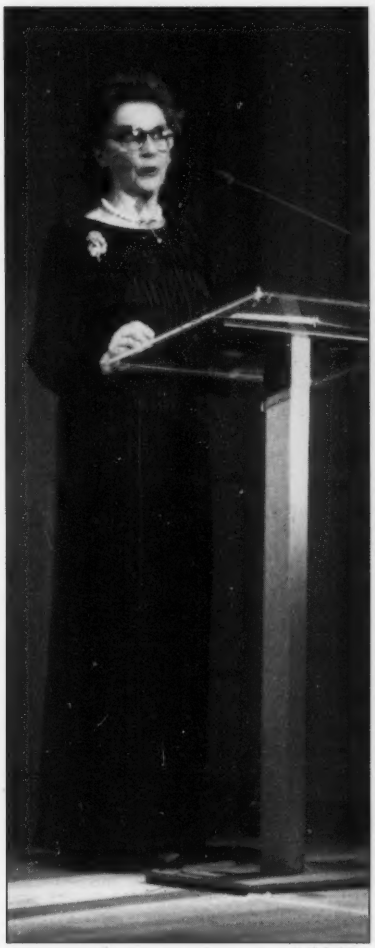
whose collections are among the Library's more than 112 million items.

His remarks were followed by those of Ray Smith of Bell Atlantic, who gave "thanks for this great institution." Mr. Gottschalk said, "We at GM join with you as supporters of the Library's richness and the diversity of its collections." Mr. Bijur said, "Texaco is extremely honored to help launch this national celebration of the bicentennial of the Library of Congress."

Rep. William Thomas (R-Calif.), chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, was represented by Rep. Robert Ney (R-Ohio), who praised "this great library" for its efforts to share its resources as widely as possible.

The evening also included tours of "American Treasures of the Library of Congress," the Library's first permanent rotating exhibition. This popular show will be featured in a one-hour television special on **Sunday, Nov. 16, at 10 p.m.** The program, of the same name and funded by Xerox as well, will include interviews with many Library staff members and will air on PBS stations nationwide.

— *Guy Lamolinara*



N. Alicia Byers

N. Alicia Byers

Zoe Caldwell (left) read letters of four first ladies; Sally Quinn and Ben Bradlee (above); Marilyn Horne and Jerry Hadley (below) hug after a shaky start to Irving Berlin's "Call Me Again."

N. Alicia Byers

President Signs Legislative Spending Bill

FY 1998 Appropriation Increases 4.1 Percent over 1997

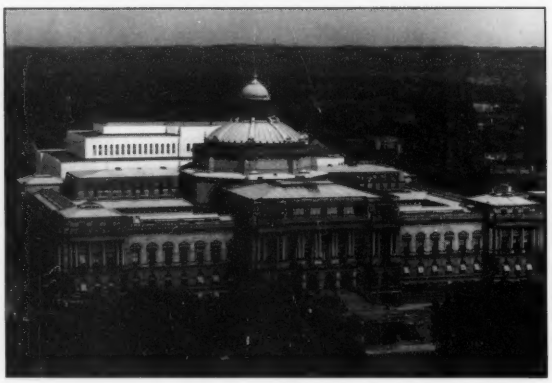
On Oct. 7 President Clinton signed Public Law 105-55 (H.R. 2209), the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill, which includes the Library's budget for the new fiscal year. Fiscal year 1998 began on Oct. 1.

P.L. 105-55 will provide LC with an FY 1998 budget of $376,719,000, a $14.8 million, or 4.1 percent, increase from LC's FY 1997 budget of $361,896,000. The FY 1998 amount includes the authority to spend $30,295,000 in receipts from the Copyright Office and the Cataloging Distribution Service.

A joint House-Senate conference committee resolved differences in the House and Senate versions of H.R. 2209 on Sept. 17. On Sept. 24 the House and Senate approved the bill for the president's signature.

Earlier this year, Dr. Billington had requested an FY 1998 budget of $387.6 million, or a 7.1 percent net increase, for the Library.

The largest part of the $14.8 million increase was $8 million for mandatory pay raises in FY 1998; however, LC must find the funds from current resources to pay for within-grade increases ($2.3 million) and higher retirement costs ($1.4 million) in FY 1998. These offsets will result in an estimated reduction of 66 full-time equivalent (FTEs) positions.



The conference committee funded $5,584,000 for the proposed Integrated Library System (ILS) (see LC *Information Bulletin*, Sept. 1997). This amount represented the Library's full request for this new system. LC must still seek approval of its ILS plan by congressional oversight committees before purchasing the new integrated system.

The conference committee generally limited price-level increases to 4 percent and approved $400,000 for contract collections security, subject to the approval of a comprehensive security program by the oversight committees.

Specific appropriation accounts within the budget were approved as follows:

For the salaries and expenses (S&E) of the Library, the conference committee approved $227,016,000, a 5.1 percent increase above the FY 1997 level of $216,007,000.

For the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the conference committee approved $64,603,000, a 3.1 percent increase in funding above CRS's FY 1997 budget of $62,641,000.

For the Copyright Office, the conference committee provided a total of $34,361,000, a 2.9 percent increase above the FY 1997 level of $33,402,000. The amount approved by the conference committee includes $22,426,000 in receipt authority.

For LC's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the conference committee approved a total of $46,561,000, a 3.5 percent increase above the FY 1997 level of $44,964,000. The amount approved includes an increase of $1,250,000 for

continued on page 327

U.S. Copyright Office Creates News Listserv

The U.S. Copyright Office of the Library of Congress announces the creation of *NewsNet*, a free electronic mailing list originating from the Copyright Office that sends periodic e-mail messages to people in the field of copyright. This service became available on Oct. 15.

Using the Internet, *NewsNet* alerts subscribers to hearings, deadlines for comments, new and proposed regulations, new publications and other copyright-related subjects of interest.

Unlike many Internet lists, the U.S. Copyright Office *NewsNet* is not an interactive discussion group or "chat room"; it is a free information service. A table of contents at the beginning of each issue lists the latest U.S. Copyright Office news. Each edition of the list is archived automatically and is available to subscribers. Additionally, where possible, links to the Copyright Office home page provide access to Federal Register notices, reports, circulars and other information.

Subscribing is easy. Using an Internet e-mail service, interested persons should send a message to: **LISTSERV@RS8.loc.gov**. The body of the message should say: **SUBSCRIBE USCOPYRIGHT**. Subscribers will receive a standard welcoming message indicating their subscriptions have been accepted.

The copyright system has been a part of the Library of Congress since 1870. In addition to administering the copyright law, the U.S. Copyright Office creates and maintains the public record of copyright registrations and recorded documents, provides technical assistance and policy advice on copyright issues to Congress and executive branch agencies, offers information to the general public and obtains copies of works for the collections of the Library of Congress.

For additional information, visit the Copyright Office home page at http://www.loc.gov/copyright.

Architectural Archives

I.M. Pei Donates His Papers to Library

Internationally acclaimed architect I.M. Pei has selected the Library as the major repository for his personal and professional papers. One of the world's most celebrated architects, Mr. Pei has designed such outstanding buildings as the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington (1978), the Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong (1989) and the Grand Louvre in Paris (1989, 1993). Over the past half century, Mr. Pei and his partners have executed more than 150 award-winning projects across the United States and around the world.

In making the announcement, Dr. Billington said: "We are delighted with the donation of this significant body of work, which documents the creation of some of the most distinguished buildings of the late 20th century and the life and times of the gifted architect who designed them. The Pei papers and drawings will join those of Benjamin Latrobe, Charles Follen McKim, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Raymond Loewy and others in comprising one of the richest repositories in the world for the study of 19th and 20th century architecture, design and engineering."

With his documents relating to the National Gallery of Art previously assigned to that museum's archives, I.M. Pei said he was "very pleased that Washington, D.C., will become the center for research about my work when the major part of the collection is received and arranged at the Library of Congress over the next few years. It was in Washington, after all, where I met my first major architectural challenge," referring to the unique site problems of the National Gallery project.

His career is studded with prestigious awards: the Arnold Brunner Award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1961), the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Medal for Architecture (1976), the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects (1979), La Grande Medaille d'Or from the French Academy of Architecture (1981), the Pritzker Architecture Prize — generally considered the architecture equivalent of the Nobel Prize — (1983), the Medal of Liberty — for outstanding contributions to American life by a foreign-born United States citizen — (1986), the National Medal of Art (1988) and the Japanese Praemium Imperiale (1989).

Ieoh Ming Pei was born in pre-Communist China in 1917, living in Hong Kong and Shanghai. In 1935 he journeyed to the United States for his education but, because of political changes in China, he did not return. Mr. Pei received his B.Arch. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1940. He went on to study with the influential architects Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He received his M.Arch. in 1946, and became an instructor and assistant professor in 1945-48.

In 1948, Mr. Pei was hired by the prominent New York real estate developer William Zeckendorf and spent the next 10 years redeveloping cities across the country. He became a United States citizen in 1955 and established an independent architectural firm in 1958. For more than three decades the firm of I.M. Pei & Associates, then I.M. Pei & Partners — a coalition that included the distinguished architects Henry N. Cobb and James Ingo Freed, and many other leading practitioners, as well as two of Mr. Pei's sons — established high standards of craftsmanship, technical expertise and architectural excellence across the world.

Mr. Pei came to national prominence in 1964 when Jacqueline Kennedy selected him to design the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. Several years later, he was awarded the commission for the East Building of the National Gallery of Art, which was subsequently chosen one of the 10 Best Buildings in America by the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. In 1979, Mr. Pei began Fragrant Hill Hotel in Beijing, the first major building undertaken in post-Maoist China. In 1989 he completed such significant buildings as the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, the 70-story Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong, and the first phase of the Grand Louvre in Paris. The second and final phase of the Grand Louvre was completed in 1993. In 1995, at age 78, Mr. Pei completed the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland.

I.M. Pei & Partners was renamed Pei Cobb Freed & Partners in 1989, and although he retired from the firm in

continued on page 327

Guy Lamolinara

The I.M. Pei-designed entrance to the Louvre Museum in Paris

Federal Express Donates $1 Million to National Digital Library Program

Federal Express made a major contribution to the Library's effort to place its most important American collections on-line with a $1 million gift to the National Digital Library Program on Sept. 23.

The donation will enable the Library to continue to add to its popular electronic American Memory collections (http://www.loc.gov/), which already present such unique items as selected notebooks of Walt Whitman, early films of Thomas Edison, sound recordings of folk music and political speeches, photographs of the Civil War, panoramic maps, and documents relating to the civil rights movement and women's suffrage.

"We are delighted that Federal Express has decided to become a major supporter of our American Memory project," said Dr. Billington. "American Memory is the Library's most important public outreach effort, one that would not be possible without the support of private donors."

"Federal Express is proud to support the educational opportunities that the National Digital Library Program has created through advancements in technology," said Federal Express Chief Executive Frederick Smith. "Our commitment to these digitized historical archives is a reflection of our commitment to quality education."

Federal Express is the world's largest express transportation company. The company employs approximately 130,000 people and operates more than 580 aircraft and 38,000 vehicles in its integrated global network.

Images of American Memory: Jackie Robinson, who in 1947 became the first African American to play major league baseball; Susan B. Anthony, who campaigned for women's suffrage in the United States; San Francisco after the great earthquake and fire in 1906.

New Collections from American Memory

Jackie Robinson and More Are Now On-Line

Baseball legend and civil rights pioneer Jackie Robinson is the subject of a new on-line collection from the Library of Congress, available at http://www.loc.gov/. Other new on-line collections offer panoramic photographs, women's suffrage pictures and important documents from America's past.

"By Popular Demand: Jackie Robinson and Other Baseball Highlights, 1860s-1960s" is one of the Library's American Memory collections of on-line materials relating to American history. American Memory

is a project of the National Digital Library Program of the Library of Congress.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's history-making 1947 season with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

"We are excited to offer this new on-line collection," said Dr. Billington. "The Library of Congress is fortunate, through the power of the Internet, to be able to share widely its unique collections on this great American, connecting in a new way with those who know and love Jackie Robinson."

The Jackie Robinson materials are distinguished by the depth and variety of their content, offering sometimes surprising substance. They are drawn from collections throughout the Library — newspaper and magazine accounts from the period, unique prints and photographs, manuscripts and even a big band score that celebrates Robinson's accomplishments.

Jackie Robinson was born in Cairo, Georgia, on Jan. 11, 1919, the youngest of five children. When he was 18 months old, his widowed mother moved the family to Pasadena,Calif., to be near family. Jackie got his first exposure to big-time American sports selling hot dogs at the Rose Bowl. In spite of financial difficulties in his family, he was able to attend Muir Technical High and Pasadena Junior College by working odd jobs. He earned an athletic scholarship to UCLA, where, in addition to playing baseball, his running sparked the undefeated 1939 football team. He won a national collegiate title in the 25-foot broad jump, and he was a top Conference basketball scorer. He left UCLA in 1941 to help support his family, entered the Army in 1942 and was commissioned in 1943. After his discharge in 1944, he coached high school basketball in Austin, Texas, and then played shortstop for the Kansas City Monarchs, a black team, where he was found by Dodger scouts.

For many years, major league executives denied that a color line existed in the game and said they would gladly sign an African American if one could be found with the talent to make their roster. The black press recognized the absurdity of the claim and Wendell Smith, sports editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, wrote eloquently of his hope that the unwritten ban on Negro players would be wiped out. Just days before Branch Rickey made his momentous announcement in 1947 that Robinson would be holding down first base for the Dodgers, Smith wrote, "Baseball writers throughout the country are standing by, waiting to flash the biggest story of the year to readers all over the globe. Men and women and kids on the street in Brooklyn are waiting and ready to hail Robinson as one of their beloved Bums."

The pressure on Jackie Robinson was enormous: If he failed it would be a long time before another black man was given a chance in the major leagues. So, in a sense, the fate of all other black ballplayers rested with him, as did the hopes of most African Americans. There was opposition from opposing teams, as well as from his own teammates, who wanted him to fail. Their attitudes changed, however, as they came to know and respect him. His success led to his election to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Other collections now on-line are:

"Words and Deeds in American History," "Taking the Long View: Panoramic Photographs, 1851-1991," and "By Popular Demand: 'Votes for Women' Suffrage Pictures, 1850-1920."

"Words and Deeds in American History" honors the centennial of the Manuscript Division with a representative sampling of materials from its collections in eight categories: the Presidency; Congress, Law and Politics; Military Affairs; Diplomacy and Foreign Policy; Arts and Literature; Science, Medicine, Exploration and Invention; African American History and Culture; and Women's History. Highlights of this offering include a:

- letter from Mary Todd Lincoln to Abraham Lincoln advising him to remove from command Gen. George B. McClellan, 1862;
- petition for bail from accused witches, ca. 1692;
- memorandum from Joseph Stalin about opening a second front in

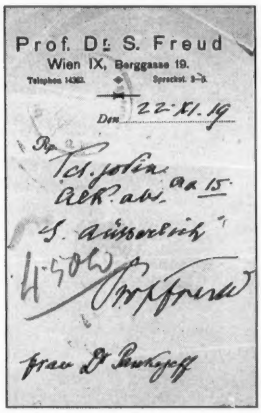
Europe during World War II, 1942; and

- prescription (right) written by Sigmund Freud for the wife of the patient known as the "Wolf Man," 1919.

The panoramic photograph collection contains images featuring cityscapes, landscapes and group portraits. For example, there are photographs of San Francisco following the great earthquake of 1906; of the Detroit Tigers baseball team; of beauty contests; and of the Old Mormon Trail in Colorado.

"Votes for Women" offers portraits of many individuals who campaigned for women's suffrage in the United States, such as Julia Ward Howe, Lucretia Mott, Mary Church Terrell and Susan B. Anthony. There are also images of parades, suffragists on picket lines and cartoons commenting on the movement.

The new collections join the already rich and varied American Memory collections, which offer, among other items, selected notebooks of Walt Whitman, early films of Thomas Edison, political speeches and oral histories, panoramic maps and photographs, and documents relating to civil rights and women's suffrage.


Prof. Dr. S. Freud
Wien IX, Berggasse 19.
Telephon 14362. Sprechst. 3–4.
Den 22.XI.19
Rp
Tct. Jodin.
Aeth. ab. Gtt. 15.
S. Aquosum
4:500
Dr. Freud
Frau Dr Lampl

Top Document

George Washington's Commission as Commander of Continental Army to Be Displayed

George Washington's commission as "commander-in-chief of the army of the United Colonies" will be on display for three months beginning Nov. 22 at the Library. The 1775 commission is part of "American Treasures of the Library of Congress," a permanent, rotating exhibition of the rarest and most significant items in the Library relating to America's past.

"George Washington's commission symbolizes the patriotism and revolutionary ardor that strengthened Americans for the battles of the American Revolution that cast off British colonial rule," said Dr. Billington. "I hope the American people will come to the nation's capital and see the commission for themselves. But for those who cannot, the document can be viewed from the Library's World Wide Web site" at http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures.

The Continental Congress commission was written on vellum and signed by John Hancock of Massachusetts, president of the Continental Congress, and Charles Thomson of Pennsylvania, secretary of the Continental Congress, on June 19, 1775.

At the time of his appointment, Washington (1732-1799) was a leader of the revolutionary movement in Virginia and had served as commander of Virginia's frontier forces and as a British colonial army officer. While others, including Hancock, hoped for the commission, Washington was appointed because of his military experience and because the Continental Congress recognized the importance of involving Virginia in the military battle then centered in New England.

Reluctant to leave home, Washington wrote to his wife, Martha, in a June 18, 1775, letter: "You may believe me my dear Patsy, when I assure you in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it." Nevertheless, Washington set out immediately to take command of the American army that was besieging the British forces in Boston.

The commission is one of many "top treasures" of the Library of Congress being shown in the rotating "American Treasures" exhibition. The treasures are displayed for three months at a time in a unique case designed to prevent damage from exposure to light and air. The case weighs 3 tons, and stands 10 feet high and 12 feet long. Built according to the highest standards of preservation and security, it is reserved exclusively for the Library's rarest and most valuable items.

The commission replaces George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights, which has been on view in the case since August. From May, when the exhibition opened, to August, Thomas Jefferson's "original rough draught" of the Declaration of Independence was displayed in the case.

Also newly on display in the top treasures case beginning Nov. 22 will be:

- A letter from John Hancock to George Washington dated July 6, 1776;
- George Washington's reading copy of the Declaration of Independence;
- Count de Rochambeau's atlas of troop encampments after the Battle of Yorktown, Va.; and
- George Washington's diary describing the British surrender of Yorktown, Oct. 19, 1781.

Other items on display beginning Nov. 22 include:

- Diego Gutiérrez's 1562 map of the Americas;
- George Washington's letterbook open to his appointments to the first Supreme Court;
- Robert E. Lee's lost orders before the battle of Antietam, Md.;
- Teddy Roosevelt's diary entry at the death of his first wife; and
- Lester Horton's 1930s costume designs for *Sacre du Printemps*.

"American Treasures of the Library of Congress" is the Library's first permanent exhibition. Its selection of rare

continued on page 321

Maps Tell a Story

Exhibit Showcases Portuguese Communities in the U.S.

Knowing that the Geography and Map Division's (G&M) rich holdings include many unique Portuguese maps, the newly appointed ambassador from Portugal, Fernando Andresen Guimarães, asked Iêda Siqueira Wiarda, the Luso-Brazilian specialist in the Hispanic Division, to arrange a tour of G&M. During that meeting, hosted by Ronald Grim, specialist in cartographic history, the idea for an exhibition highlighting Portuguese contributions to world geography and to U.S. communities was discussed.

Reps. Patrick J. Kennedy (D-R.I.) and Richard W. Pombo (R-Calif.) and Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) — all of whom have large Luso-American constituencies — also supported the idea. With the guidance of Teresa Greenwald, the Portuguese Embassy's social and communities counselor, and with funding from the Luso-American Development Foundation, the Secretary of State for Portuguese Communities and Newport Concrete Inc., the idea became a reality with the opening on June 10, the National Day of Portugal.

During the exhibition opening, some 1,000 book and nonbook materials were presented by Universidade Aberta (Lisbon) President Armando Rocha Trindade and Maria Laura Bettencourt Pires, who recalled her days as a researcher at the Library.

Yusef El-Amin

Ronald Grim points out to Rep. Richard Pombo the location of the farm of Rep. Pombo's grandfather near Tracy, Calif., as Iêda Siqueira Wiarda looks on.

With 32 items, including maps, photographs and newspapers, the exhibition highlights the Portuguese impact in New England, California, Hawaii and, more recently, New Jersey.

Although numerous countries and individuals were involved in the exploration and mapping of the Americas, it was the Portuguese who set the stage during the 15th century. Portuguese-born and -sponsored explorers played a key role in charting a route around the southern tip of South America; in exploring and exploiting the waters bordering the northeast coast of North America; and in exploring the Pacific Coast, especially the area that today is the state of California. Columbus himself owed much of his training and geographic knowledge to the Portuguese.

Treasures
continued from page 320

books, music, manuscripts, maps, photographs, drawings, audio clips and videotapes gives visitors a first-hand look at a cross section of the vast repository that has been called "America's Memory." Highlights of the exhibition include the first surviving book printed in America, early baseball cards, the contents of Lincoln's pockets on the night of his assassination and a photograph of the Wright brothers' first flight taken at the instant of takeoff.

The exhibition displays 240 items arranged in the manner of Thomas Jefferson's library, the seed from which the present Library of Congress collections grew. In addition, an audio tour featuring selections from the Library's collection of sound recordings provides an array of memories, many of them drawn from the early years of radio and TV broadcasting archived in the Library's collections. Listeners can hear both narration about and the actual voices of presidents, poets and other famous figures, including Theodore Roosevelt, Robert Frost and Woodrow Wilson. The two-hour audio tour also features music, including the voices of Beverly Sills and Jelly Roll Morton.

The self-directed listening device is a digital audio wand, which allows the user random access to audio presentations at various points in the exhibition through the use of a numeric keypad. Visitors may rent the wand at the entry to the exhibition from Thwaite Productions for $2.50.

"Treasures Talks" with the curators of particular items in "American Treasures" are being held at noon each Wednesday at a featured display case in the exhibition hall. The half-hour talks are free. For information about the talks, call (202) 707-5223.

Harry N. Abrams Inc. has published a companion volume with an introduction by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Garry Wills and a foreword by Dr. Billington. *American Treasures in the Library of Congress: Memory/Reason/Imagination* ($39.95) is available in the Library sales shops and wherever books are sold.

The exhibition, made possible by a grant of $1.1 million from the Xerox Foundation, is the set piece of a year-long celebration marking the official reopening of the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building during its 100th anniversary year. The Jefferson Building, under renovation since 1984, may now be seen in its fully restored state. Located at 10 First Street S.E., it is closed on Sundays and federal holidays. "American Treasures" exhibition hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Both the building and the exhibition are barrier-free and accessible to persons with disabilities. Tickets are no longer required for entrance. Groups of 10 or more are requested to call the Visitor Services Office at (202) 707-9779 to arrange a tour. For recorded information about the exhibition, call (202) 707-3834, (202) 707-6200 TTY.

The Old and the New

New Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky Embodies Both

by Yvonne French

Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky uses modern technology to write his poems, employs modern urban imagery in his poems, but, like an old master, refers often to classical antecedents and universal themes told and retold over the centuries. He is, in the words of author Jay Parini, both old and new. For example, he is an award-winning translator of *The Inferno of Dante*. Yet he is also poetry editor of *Slate*, an on-line magazine.

The same spirit of old and new informs his main plan as Poet Laureate. In the "Favorite Poem Project," he wants 100 or more Americans to read poems they love on tape.

The project is part of the Library's celebration of its bicentennial in 2000, which kicked off this month with a gala fund-raising event (see story on page 312). The resulting archives will be, in Mr. Pinsky's words, "a record, at the end of the century, of what we choose, and what we do with our voices and faces, when asked to say aloud a poem that we love."

Mr. Pinsky believes the human body responds instinctively when one reads aloud, much as people respond to being read to. The act of storytelling or reading a poem, he says, "engages the mind and the body in a genetically primary sensation that involves a column of air in the trunk and the production of syllables. The sensation causes comfort and alertness. Thus the individual body, not necessarily even the artist, can be a medium for art."

The Favorite Poem project would include about 100 or more people, some of them eminent civic figures such as the president and members of Congress. They would be taped in their homes, offices or other familiar settings.

For example, Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) has offered to read aloud T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Rudolph Aukshun, a retired parole officer in Freeland, Md., has offered to read a Langston Hughes poem ("Hold On to Your Dreams") that he used to recite to his clients; a young man who had been released recently from prison once quoted the poem back to him from memory.

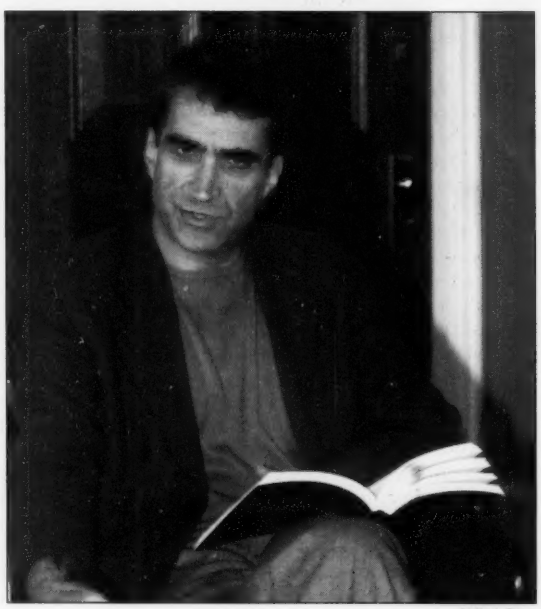
The poems do not have to be by American poets. "They could pick a poem in Chinese, Navajo, Spanish, Yiddish or Italian if they want, as long as they furnish a translation," said Mr. Pinsky. But they cannot be original poems. "I am convinced that this video and audio record of many Americans reading aloud poems they love will have a lot of value for our country: as a record of where we stand, as a model for education in the future, and as testimony to the possibly neglected state of the culture we already have."

Culture was one topic of Mr. Pinsky's wide-ranging inaugural address, "Digital Culture and the Individual Soul," in the Montpelier Room the evening of Oct. 9. Mr. Pinsky discussed "mass culture and the increasing efficiency and brilliance of rapidly duplicated images, text and sound by approaching the new cultural developments through the lens of poetry." Launching into his topic, he said, "The first and main thing about digital culture is that it is part of history. It smells of us. It is human. We made it. It is an outcome."

He continued: "The computer is an extension of poetry. Poetry is a technique developed by this animal, the human — a fairly useless animal. It has no claws, no hide, no real teeth and it doesn't run fast, but it is clever and it looks around a lot. For survival it developed forms of communication evolved for the purposes of memory, for the effective storage of important information and the transmission of that information accurately and effectively from one person to that person's peers."

As the storyteller, bard or poet transmitted information through the poem, so computers are able to transmit mass art and culture, Mr. Pinsky said.

"An image of Michael Jackson singing with brilliant cinematography is reproduced and duplicated tens of thousands of times and it can spread all over the globe very rapidly. [In another example of mass culture] first you have the winky-gahinky movie, then the doll, then the Burger King and McDonald's knockoffs, then the high-culture Medea action figure. The medium for mass art is by its nature highly duplicable. I do not deplore or applaud it, but I am trying to understand it. My idea of body piercing is that it is not a revolt against parents, it is a revolt against one's own childhood, the Electra winky-gahinky action figure. American 12- and 13-year-olds hunger for something that's not



N. Alicia Byers

Mr. Pinsky reads from "An Explanation of America" during a news conference in the Poetry Office.

likely to be in the Sears Roebuck catalog. The individual soul loves mass art but we become jaded. Sometimes I just turn off the TV and reach for a copy of the *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson.*

With that, he read several poems by himself and others. (One, the last 30 or so lines of his book-length poem "An Explanation of America," is on this page.)

The lecture marked the beginning of Mr. Pinsky's term as Poet Laureate and opened the fall 1997 literary series at the Library of Congress (see calendar on page 327). At a luncheon that afternoon, Dr. Billington welcomed Mr. Pinsky by touting his idea for the Favorite Poem Project. "For the 200th anniversary of this institution, we hope to represent this glorious nation by showing Americans in relation to poetry, yet outside the professional microcosm of poetry."

Unlike the Library's Archive of Recorded Poetry and Literature, the Favorite Poem Project would not focus on professional poets and poetry critics. The Library of Congress has been producing the archive since the early 1950s, thanks to a gift from the late Gertrude Clarke Whittall, who wanted to bring the enjoyment and appreciation of good literature to a larger audience. The archive now numbers more than 2,000 authors reading their own work and nearly 3,000 recordings altogether; some of the authors have recorded more than once. All public literary programs presented at the Library by its Poetry and Literature Center are recorded on audio, and, since 1966, video.

Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-N.J.) who, like Mr. Pinsky, was born in Long Branch, N.J., also made brief remarks at the luncheon. "He happens to be Jewish and I happen to be Italian. The interplay between the two communities in Long Branch was spectacular. This is a very special guy, not only for the nation, but also for us locally."

Mr. Pinsky turned 57 Oct. 20. He grew up the eldest of three siblings only blocks away from the ocean in Long Branch. He said at a news conference Oct. 9 that being near the beach influenced his poetry, which he did not take up until he failed at the saxophone. The turning point from music "to a more natural medium" — words — came when he caused a band he was playing with to lose an audition. "I stunk up the place," he said.

His verse translation of *The Inferno of Dante* won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for poetry and an award from the Academy of American Poets. He called it a work of metrical engineering rather than scholarly study, adding that he believes the *Inferno's* popularity is due in part to the fact that, unlike his predecessors, he translated it sentence by sentence rather than line by line. "I liked the difficulty of fitting the parts together," he said.

Mr. Pinsky is a professor of English in the graduate creative writing program at Boston University. He is the author of five books of poetry: *Sadness and Happiness* (1975); *An Explanation of America* (1979), awarded the Saxifrage Prize as the year's best volume of poetry from a small or university press; *History of My Heart* (1983), which won the William Carlos Williams Prize; *The Want Bone* (1990); and *The Figured Wheel: New and Collected Poems, 1966-1996* (1996). He is the translator of *The Separate Notebooks*, by Czeslaw Milosz (1983). He is a recipient of the 1996 Poetry Society of America's Shelley Memorial Award. Mr. Pinsky is the author of three collections of essays: Landor's Poetry (1968), *The Situation of Poetry* (1977) and *Poetry and the World* (1988). A new book, *A Brief Guide to the Sounds of Poetry*, is forthcoming. He served as poetry editor of *The New Republic* during much of the 1980s.

Mr. Pinsky is married to a psychotherapist and has three children.

continued on page 325

From 'An Explanation of America'

Mr. Pinsky introduced this final passage from his book-length poem "An Explanation of America," by saying it tracks the growth of a daughter from ages 8 to 11. The father is a professor at a women's college, and she plays a part in a production of The Winter's Tale.

"... The Founders made
A Union mystic yet rational, and sudden,
As if suckled by the very wolf of Rome ...
Indentured paupers and criminals grew rich
Trading tobacco; molasses; cotton; and slaves
With names like horses, or from Scott or Plutarch.
In the mills, there was every kind of name,
With even "Yankee" a kind of *jankel* or Dutchman.
The Yankees pulled stones from the earth, to farm,
And when the glacial boulders were piled high,
Skilled masons came from Parma and Piacenza
And settled on Division Street and Oak Street
And on the narrow side streets between them. In winter,
Mr. Diehl hired Italian boys to help
Harvest the ice from Diehl's Pond onto sledges
And pack it into icehouses, where it kept
To be cut and delivered all summer long.

The Linden Apartments stand where Diehl's Pond was;
But even when I was little, the iceman came
To houses that had iceboxes, and we could beg
Splinters to suck, or maybe even a ride,
Sitting on wet floorboards and steaming tarps
As far as Saint Andrew's, or the V.F.W.
The Eagles, Elks, Moose, Masons each had a building:
I pictured them like illustrations from *Alice.*
As television came in, the lodges faded,
But people began to group together by hobbies,
Each hobby with its magazines and clubs;
My father still played baseball twice a week;
And even after you were born, the schools
And colleges were places set apart,
As of another time; and one time you
Performed in *The Winter's Tale.*

And at the end,
As people applauded louder and louder, you
Stood with young girls who wore gray wigs and beards,
All smiling and holding hands — as if the *Tale*
Had not been sad at all, or was all a dream,
And winter was elsewhere, howling on the mountains
Unthinkably old and huge and far away —
At the far opposite edge of our whole country,
So large, and strangely broken, and unforseen."

Hispanic Heritage

Author Isabel Allende Reads to Overflow Crowd

Chilean novelist Isabel Allende spoke before an overflow crowd in the Mumford Room on Sept. 15, the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month. The crowd was so large it spilled over into the foyer, where two TV monitors were set up. Many ended up sitting on the floor. Long lines of people waited for Ms. Allende to sign books before and after the talk, which she gave in English.

N. Alicia Byers

Isabel Allende

Ms. Allende talked about how she came to write *Paula* (HarperCollins, 1995), her only nonfiction work. It is about her daughter, who died in 1992 of porphyria, a disease whose symptoms include extreme sensitivity to light. King George III also was a victim of this largely hereditary disease.

The earthy humor and self-deprecating machisma of the author kept the talk from becoming maudlin. Between tales of administering to her ailing daughter, she described work on her next book of nonfiction, *Aphrodite: A Memoir of the Senses.* It is a book about sex and food, mostly aphrodisiac.

"This is a masculine phenomenon. In every culture since the beginning of time, man has looked for aphrodisiacs. What does that tell you? The item is usually limp!"

In the one-hour talk, she stayed true to its title, "Stories and Dreams." "Stories are like dreams. They follow their own rules. Stories are to humankind what dreams are to individuals. If we are awakened, we suffer."

She discussed how she uses dreams in writing. She keeps a notebook on the night table next to her bed and writes down what happens in her dreams.

"In my dreams, if a child cries with the voice of an old man, I check the book I am writing, maybe there is a character with the wrong voice. If the child is in a maze, I check the plot. Maybe it is too confusing."

Ms. Allende also said many of her dreams have been prophetic. "Before Paula became sick in Madrid in 1991, and went into a coma, I had an unusual dream about her." In the book, she writes directly to Paula:

"You were standing in the center of a hollow tower, something like a grain silo filled with hundreds of fluttering doves. Memé's [Paula's grandmother's] voice was saying, 'Paula is dead.' You began to rise off the ground. I ran to catch you by the belt of your coat but you pulled me with you, and we floated like feathers, circling upward. ... I was determined to hold you back, nothing would take you from me. Overhead was a small opening through which I could see a blue sky with one perfect white cloud, like a Magritte painting, and then I understood, horrified, that you would be able to pass through but the aperture was too narrow for me."

Returning to the subject of writing, she said she got her experience with "magical realism" from her grandmother, who claimed to be clairvoyant and telekinetic. Ms. Allende said she witnessed her grandmother using mental power to move a sugar bowl across a table. The author took the opportunity to give a good-natured jibe to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who popularized for contemporary American readers a surrealistic style that combines with an aura of reality. The magical-realist classic *"One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the best novel written in Latin America in 100 years, maybe ever. ... After seven books, I think I write better."

Ms. Allende brought some people in the audience to tears when she movingly discussed her daughter's long decline. Paula had been recently married when the disease manifested itself. Honeymooning in Scotland, she awoke one night to write a letter, which she put in an envelope marked "to be opened when I die." When it became clear that Paula would never emerge from her coma, Ms. Allende took the sealed envelope from a box of her grandmother's relics and read "I would not want to remain trapped in my body. ... Please do not be sad. I am closer to you than I was before. We spirits can only help those who are happy."

After Paula's death, Ms. Allende would walk to her office in Sausalito, Calif., light a candle in front of Paula's photograph, turn on the computer and cry. Some days she did not write at all, other days the sentences flowed. Eventually, she had 400 pages, which became the book she named after her daughter. "I have had awesome feedback. In Paula, readers seem to find a space where they can confront their own fears and hopes."

Ms. Allende is the niece of Socialist Chilean President Salvador Allende, who committed suicide after a military coup in 1973. She is the author of *The House of Spirits* (Knopf, 1985), *Of Love and Shadows* (Knopf, 1987), *Eva Luna* (Knopf, 1988), *The Stories of Eva Luna* (Bantam, 1992), *The Infinite Plan* (HarperCollins, 1993) and *Paula.* The talk was sponsored by the Hispanic Division, the Poetry and Literature Center and the Embassy of Chile.

— *Yvonne French*

Endangered Music Project

New Release Features Music from Brazil

The American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress, in cooperation with Rykodisc and 360 Degree Projections, has released two new albums in the Endangered Music Project series: *The Discoteca Collection: Missão de Pesquisas Folclóricas* (Rykodisc RCD 10403) and *L.H. Corrêa de Azevedo: Music of Ceará and Minas Gerais* (Rykodisc RCD 10404).

These historical collections of field recordings were made in the late 1930s and early 1940s and are now part of the Folklife Center's Archive of Folk Culture. The albums were co-produced by Alan Jabbour, director of the center, and Mickey Hart, the renowned percussionist who, through this series of albums, is making available to new audiences the musical cultures of many regions. All material has been expertly remastered from the original source discs for these releases. Liner notes were written by ethnomusicologist Morton Marks.

Centro de Documentação da Funarte, Rio de Janeiro

From the cover of *L.H. Corrêa de Azevedo: Music of Ceará and Minas Gerais*, a new CD from the Endangered Music Project

The Discoteca Collection is 1938-vintage field recordings culled from the library of the Discoteca Pública Municipal (Municipal Public Recordings Collection) in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The Discoteca dispatched a team to six states in north and northeast Brazil to document regional folklore, ritual music and dance. The cultural expedition gathered recordings, musical instruments, costumes and ritual objects. The music they collected, much of which accompanied ritual, social and dramatic dance, is primarily vocal, accompanied by various types of drums, bells, rattles, shakers and other assorted Brazilian percussion and strings.

Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo, a professor of music and composer from Rio de Janeiro, recorded the material on *Music of Ceará and Minas Gerais* in the early 1940s. Azevedo's involvement in folk culture began in 1937 and led to his appointment as chair in National Folklore at Rio's National Institute of Music. In 1941 he visited Washington as a guest of the Pan-American Union and returned to Brazil with recording equipment loaned to him by the Library of Congress. He then began to undertake arduous expeditions through Brazil documenting a great variety of his country's folk music. The northern and central Brazilian songs on this collection are performed on shaker, wooden box, claps, strings, bell, friction drum, guitar and other instruments. The music Azevedo recorded documents the roots of Brazilian music that would later enter the mainstream of world popular music.

The Endangered Music Project draws its material from one of the world's greatest repositiories of ethnomusicological treasures, the American Folklife Center's Archive of Folk Culture in the Library of Congress. The term "endangered music" can be used to describe music from cultures whose existence is threatened by war, political upheaval or natural disasters or by the encroachment of industrial and agricultural interests.

Missão de Pesquisas Folclóricas and *Music of Ceará and Minas Gerais* are available in the world music sections of retail outlets nationwide or from Rykodisc mail order: (888) 2-EARFUL or (888) 232-7385.

Pinsky

continued from page 323

Mr. Pinsky's work has drawn the praise of many. James Longenbach wrote in *The Nation* that "among the many writers who have come of age in our *fin de siècle*, none has succeeded more completely as poet, critic and translator than Robert Pinsky. *The Figured Wheel: New and Collected Poems* allows us to recognize the most scrupulously intelligent body of work produced by an American poet in the past 25 years." Author Jay Parini described Mr. Pinsky in *the Chicago Review* as a writer "with a deeply humane sensibility, drawing new water from old wells, but also reaching into areas where nobody would have guessed that poetry could be found. ... An example of what is best in our current poetry."

Dr. Billington in March appointed Mr. Pinsky as the ninth Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry and the 39th Consultant in Poetry.

— Ms. French is a public affairs specialist in the Public Affairs Office.

News from the Center for the Book

Georgia Center for the Book Approved

The Library of Congress has approved a proposal from the DeKalb County Public Library for the creation of a Georgia Center for the Book, to be affiliated with the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

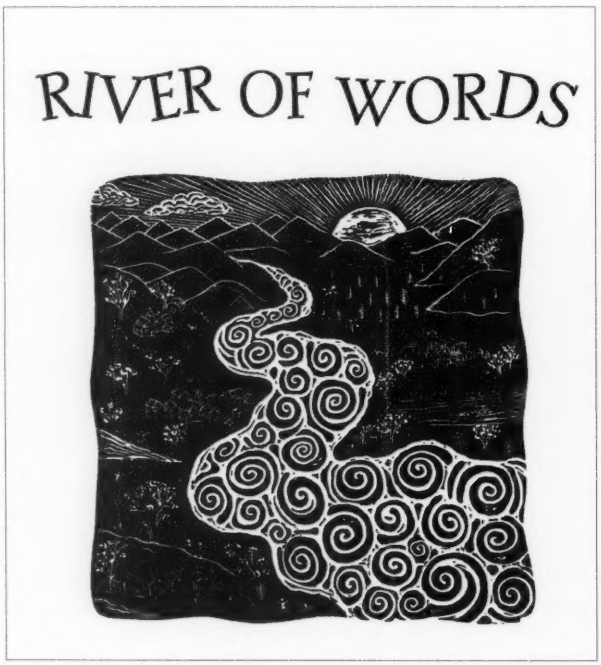
"This is a wonderful development," said John Y. Cole, director of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. "We look forward to working with the Georgia Center for the Book in promoting books, reading and libraries in new and imaginative ways."

The Georgia Center for the Book, located at the DeKalb County Public Library, will be a focal point for the celebration of Georgia's literary heritage, promote collaboration among the state's publishers, writers, book sellers and librarians, and "highlight the value of the book as a central element in our culture."

According to Darro C. Wiley, director of the DeKalb Public Library, the new center's statewide advisory board will reflect Georgia's varied "community of the book," including "representatives of several academic institutions and local writers organizations."

For information about the Georgia Center for the Book, contact Anne Johnson, Executive Director, Georgia Center for the Book, DeKalb Public Library, 215 Sycamore St., Decatur, GA 30030. Ms. Johnson may be reached by telephone at (404) 370-8450 or by fax at (404) 370-8469.

■ **"Great American Portraits" Programs to Be Presented Nationwide.** Author Phyllis Theroux is presenting "Great American Portraits," a program of reading by well-known Americans about Americans, in four cities under the sponsorship of the Center for the Book. The spoken portraits are drawn from her new book, *The Book of Eulogies: A Collection of Memorial Tributes, Poetry, Essays, and Letters of Condolence* (Scribner, 1997). Each program features citizens of the state in which the program is being held.



"The Great American Portraits program at the Library of Congress on May 14 was such a success," said Center for the Book Director John Y. Cole, "that we decided to share it with the country through the state centers for the book. This four-city pilot project is the first step.

The first state program was held at the San Francisco Public Library on Sept. 26. The Connecticut Center for the Book will make "Great American Portraits in Connecticut" its inaugural event in Hartford on Nov. 17. For information, contact Kathleen Lyons, Connecticut Center for the Book, phone (860) 543-8652. Dates for programs in St. Louis and Chicago have not yet been set.

■ **1998 "River of Words" Contest Announced.** The International Rivers Network, the Center for the Book and former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass have announced the third annual "River of Words National Environmental Poetry & Art Contest" for children in grades K-12. The contest is free and open to poets and artists 5-19 years of age.

"River of Words" is designed to increase awareness and understanding of the natural world and its connection to artistic expression and the human spirit. The contest theme is "watersheds." "The project strives to give children a sense of place and belonging," said co-founder Mr. Hass. "We're encouraging children to explore their neighborhoods, schoolyards, creeks and imaginations," added project director and co-founder Pamela Michael.

Eight grand prize winners and their parents will win trips to Washington, where they will be honored next spring during a program sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Center for the Book supports the project as part of its "Rivers of America" program.

The deadline for contest submissions is Feb. 15, 1998. For entry forms and contest guidelines, or to order the 50-page Teacher's Guide ($6, includes postage and handling), contact International Rivers Network, River of Words Project, P.O. Box 4000-J, Berkeley, CA 94704, telephone (510) 433-7020, fax (510) 848-1008, e-mail row@irn.org or visit IRN's Web site: http://www.irn.org.

Berlin Divided

Peter Schneider Reads from Works

Renowned German author and novelist Peter Schneider read from three of his books on Sept. 5 for the Library's Archive of World Literature on Tape. He was welcomed to the Library by David H. Kraus, assistant chief of the European Division, and Margrit B. Krewson, German/Dutch area specialist.

Mr. Schneider read first from *The Wall Jumper* (1983), the English translation of *Der Mauerspringer* (1982). He next read in German from *Paarungen (Couplings)* (1992), and finally he read excerpts of an unpublished and untitled German manuscript.

The theme of the works he read reflects his fascination with Berliners' political and psychological ambivalence while their city was divided. Mr. Schneider has studied at the universities of Freiburg, Munich and Berlin and has lived in Berlin since 1962. The city is both the setting and focus of much of his work. A political journalist and essayist as well as a novelist, Mr. Schneider also wrote the screenplay for the film "Knife in the Head."

Pei
continued from page 317

1990, Mr. Pei remains very active professionally. Current works include the Miho Museum in Shiga, Japan, the Musée d'Art Moderne in Luxembourg, the Goulandris Museum in Athens, and the new Schauhaus addition to the German Historical Museum in Berlin.

I.M. Pei is recognized for the careful siting and massing of his buildings, their rich contrasts of external forms and materials, the bold modeling and beauty of their interior spaces, and their exquisite details. His style often features trademark geometrical shapes, the use of natural light and a primary concern for the people who use his structures. He designed, for example, the Garden Court of the East Building of the National Gallery of Art as a "public indoor piazza." His redesign of the Louvre has drawn to it a steady stream of people, young and old, from all over the world.

A minor grouping of the Pei documents arrived at the Library in 1996. The majority of the papers, photographs and drawings are expected to arrive in several increments over the next few years, after which they will be arranged and described. An announcement will be made when the materials are available in the Library's Manuscript and Prints and Photographs divisions.

Budget
continued from page 316

5,000 additional talking book machines.

LC's American Folklife Center received a 3 percent increase of $27,700 for an FY 1998 budget of $956,500.

The conference committee provided less funding for LC's furniture and furnishings account than in FY 1997: $4,178,000, a 14.4 percent decrease from the FY 1997 level of $4,882,000.

The conference committee approved two administrative provisions for the Library: one to establish a revolving fund for the cooperative acquisitions program; the other to allow for gift funds to be invested in the same manner as provided for trust funds.

Members of the conference committee were Reps. James T. Walsh (R-N.Y.), C.W. Bill Young (R-Fla.), R. Duke Cunningham (R-Calif.), Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.), Tom Latham (R-Iowa), Bob Livingston (R-La.), José E. Serrano (D-N.Y.), Vic Fazio (D-Calif.), Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) and David Obey (D-Wisc.); and Sens. Robert F. Bennett (R-Utah), Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Larry E. Craig (R-Idaho), Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Byron L. Dorgan (D-N.D.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.).

1997 LC Poetry and Literature Schedule

- Nov. 13, David Gewanter and Myra Sklarew, Montpelier Room
- Nov. 20, Philip Levine and Mark Turpin, Mumford Room
- Dec. 4, Heather McHugh and Ellen Bryant Voigt, Montpelier Room
- Dec. 11, Carl Phillips and C.D. Wright, Montpelier Room

All readings begin at 6:45 p.m. Admission is free.

The poetry and literature reading series at the Library of Congress is the oldest in the Washington area, and one of the oldest in the United States. This annual series of public poetry and fiction readings, lectures, symposia and occasional dramatic performances began in the 1940s and has been almost exclusively supported since 1951 by a gift from the late Gertrude Clarke Whittall, who wanted to bring the enjoyment and appreciation of good literature to a larger audience.

The Poetry and Literature Center, which administers the series, is also the home of the Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry, a position that has existed since 1936, when the late philanthropist Archer M. Huntington endowed the Chair of Poetry at the Library of Congress.

Archibald MacLeish, who was Librarian from 1939 to 1944, determined the Consultant in Poetry should be an annual appointment. Since then, many of the nation's most eminent poets have served as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress and, after the passage of Public Law 99-194 in 1985, as Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry. The Poet Laureate suggests authors to read in the literary series, plans other special literary events during the reading season, and usually introduces the programs.

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